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ABSTRACT

Social change goals and objectives may be achieved by social change advocates through the policy development process. Policy is defined as a set of decisions governing the behavior and actions of institutions and individuals. The legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government comprise the major policy institutions. The bureaucracy of the executive branch and public interest groups also play a significant role in shaping policy. In the policy development process of the congressional branch, change advocates can intervene at three central points: the subcommittee, full committee, and full body deliberations. In the executive branch, intervention points include regulations, budget, and program planning activities. Litigation is the primary vehicle to obtain policy guidance in the courts. Commitment to obtaining effective organization, leadership, and resources to effect change is of primary importance. The major purpose of organizations providing policy guidance is to defend and promote the interests of their constituencies through the linking of data, research and evaluation findings, information, and communication with political sophistication. Elements fundamental to the policy change effort involve building the organization: knowing the political processes: networking local, regional, and national communications; and developing coalitions between change advocates and organizations. (Author/KC)

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SOCIAL CHANGE AND POLICY DEVELOPMENT: AN AGENDA FOR CHANGE ADVOCATES

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PREFACE

The poor, whether black, white, brown, yellow, or red whether handicapped, or women or whether old or young, must come to grips with the great social issues of the day. Basic survival, (housing and food), employment, health, education and other social services are fundamental issues that need to be addressed by a countless number of groups and change advocates.

With the laudable rhetoric for social justice, equity, and opportunity buzzing throughout the country it is time for action and not hopeless waiting for the powers to respond. The time of waiting is over, and policy guidance and development as one strategy for social change must be established. Social change advocates representing the poor who utilize this strategy can add to their repertoire for change. I hope this is done and done quickly.

I. THE 60's AND 70's: TRIUMPH AND FRUSTRATION.

The 1960's marked the decade where fundamental principles of American Society were challenged. The Civil Rights and Peace Movements typified the strength and scope of a vast number of people interested in changing the conditions of American society. One major problem facing the society was inequality and lack of opportunity for the poor. The nation responded to this inequality by establishing a number of policies and programs aimed at providing greater opportunity for the poor. (e.g., War on Poverty, Educational Opportunity legislation). From these actions, a number of social interventions were established at the Federal level to provide opportunities through categorical programs (e.g., Student Financial Assistance) to eliminate the gap between groups of people.

Many individuals and organizations fought hard to establish these social strategies, and were gratified to see that society was beginning to respond to these inequities. Others felt society had not done enough, and that a total renewal or revolution was in order. But the impact of the sixties was made. Numerous social and economic policies and programs seeking to eliminate inequity had been initiated. For some, the revolution had come, and it was time now to implement the principles of the civil rights and Peace Movements.

But as we entered the 70's a curious phenomenon took place. The society began to stiffen, and in the face of protest and demonstration, came repressive force.

What's more, the social programs established in the 60's began to experience serious difficulties. They were frought with conflict, lack of adequate funding, and focus. Trying to address 200 years of inequity took greater human and material resources and their efforts to increase funding and training were met with resistance from the public and private sources. With the impending failure of society to respond vision seemed to slip away and frustration began to mount.

As the 70's progressed -- nearing the 1980's, forces in society began to question the efficacy and viability of the social interventions established earlier. Critics complained that the social programs were not working, too costly, discriminatory to the majority and counter to the American ideals of "fairness", merit and hard work. Even more startling was that it was no longer a question of whether or not these policies and interventions were fundamentally correct, and in need of improvement, but whether or not such efforts should exist at all. To add to this argument was the proposition that the needs of the poor and minorities had been met. Programs and opportunities

were established and the private and public sector had adequately responded to the question of equity and representation. Thus, special programs to continue such efforts were no longer of use, even though the poor and minorities had not achieved equal access to all societal institutions.

Social change in the United States came to a standstill and the ideals of the 60's seemed to become romantic illusions of the past. Now as we enter the 1980's another blow has stricken the social justice objectives of the 1960's; namely the fiscal conservative movement. With recession and inflation on the rise, society has begun to cut back on social policies and expenditures. The recent budget cuts translate into less resources for the poor, handicapped, and the elderly. Future generations of poor Americans have been assigned even greater hardships without adequate mechanisms to establish opportunity and social equity.

Coming to grips with these adversities is difficult, especially for the change advocate seeking continued and significant change. Strategies seem to fail. The most perplexing problem social change advocates face is a lack of direction and knowledge of strategies to counter these obstacles. The question continually arises, where do we go from here? Since demonstrations, public exposure, and

strikes have a limited impact, what other social change avenues are available to us to stem, the tide of the curtailing American committment.

One area in need of exploration by social change advocates is the policy development arena. Previous experience and lack of understanding in this area, has narrowed our view of what may be possible to achieve. Impacting on the Policy development process, may very well be the added strategy to revitalize social change in America.

II. POLICY DEVELOPMENT: A WELL KEPT SECRET

Without question one of the greatest inhibiters to policy involvement in the poor community has been a lack of knowledge, and understanding of the policy process. For many this process has been a well kept secret and being able to utilize this process is tantamount to obtaining power. The change advocate representing the poor has had little access in most cases to the intricacies of Federal and State policy development. The organized and rich have been privy to these processes for some time, especially since many had the opportunity to be exposed at an early age to policy deliberations.

A second major reason why the poor and advocates of the poor have not utilized the policy process is the lack of resources. It takes a great deal of time and money to engage the policy process. Travel, staff, communication and analysis are but a few of the pre-requisites to successful participation in the policy process.

But even though the poor and advocates of the poor have had little understanding and resources to confront the policy arena, there have been some successes, and in each success three essential ingredients have been critical -- leadership, organization and resources. It goes without saying, that human and monetary resources are sorely needed to support strategies seeking social change. The need to share resources and information, should be a major goal among existing organizations.

Leadership is a critical factor in any social change movement. Organizations need to spend time preparing leaders and exposing them to the social, political, and economic issues facing the poor. But it is important to realize that, the organized effort of a number of individuals performing a set of activities around commonly understood goals and objectives can make the difference. It is through such organization that policy guidance can be achieved. This may be another major reason why the poor and advocates of the poor have not fully utilized the

policy process. Without an organizational infrastructure and series of networks to support movement, the policy process is unaffected, unreachable and difficult to pursue.

But suppose the organization infrastructure is established with the expansion of non-profit and community based organization, the basic structure is available. The next question is what is the process of policy development? How does it work? and how can we penetrate it?

III. POLICY DEVELOPMENT IN THE U.S.

Before we discuss how policy change can occur, we must understand its dimensions. Policy may be defined as a set of decisions governing the behavior and actions of institutions and individuals. Policy may be legislative in the form of laws, administrative in the form of rules and regulations, and judicial in the form of legal requirements. Policy governs action and can prescribe goals and objectives for the nation to pursue.

The major policy institutions are the legislative, Executive and Judicial Branches of Government. At the Federal level, Congress is vested with responsibility to establish laws (policy) and the executive branch seeks to influence law-making with proposing strategies and through the administration of programs and budget. The Judicial

Branch insures the constitutionality and legality of Congressional and Executive actions. Each of these policy institutions has a hand in establishing policy in America. They interact and the give and take process (e.g., tradeoffs) serves as the basis of formulating policy.

Beyond the significance and power of the above mentioned institutions there are two other important policy sectors that influence policy development (1) The bureaucracy, under the Executive Branch, plays a heavy role in shaping policy. Not only do they administer Federal programs and resources, but they help define what can be done and under what circumstances through regulatory action. Protected from the public with strict rules of secrecy and information control the bureaucracy often acts independently and can be considered as the fourth arm of policy development. (2) A fifth important sector, and perhaps the most viable for change advocates, are the public interest groups. Commonly known as lobbyists, public and private interest organizations (non-profit organizations and networks) can play a significant role in influencing and shaping policy. In the case of social change advocates single issue organizations are most appropriate to focus resources and attention on specific policy arenas (e.g., education, health, economy). They can initiate

legislative and executive actions leading to supportive policy development every step of the way. Thus, the major forces that shape and develop policies at the Federal level continue to be Congress, Executive, Judicial, bureaucracy, and the public interest organizations. The interaction between these major forces during the policy process determines the policy outcomes at the national level.

IV. INFLUENCING THE POLICY SECTORS: TECHNOLOGY FOR CHANGE

Policy is developed under certain rules and timelines. If we investigate the policy development process of the Congressional branch, we would find several intervention points to influence policy. There are two major processes that take place in Congress; the authorization (establishing the parameters and authority of Governmental activity) and the appropriation (allocating resources to authorized activities) processes. Both processes have critical decision points that shape final legislation (policy). Table #1 depicts the key intervention points. As this Table demonstrates there are three central intervention points, where input in the policy process can occur; at the subcommittee, full committee, and full body deliberations. Common practice requires planning well in advance to the subcommittee level since, the subcommittee work is generally accepted. The other intervention point is getting a representative (Senator or Congressman) to sponsor a bill, amending at the subcommittee level or seeking approval at the full house session.

But it is important to focus on the appropriate members of the committees who have the ability to insert policy language. The necessary preparation and support to have committee adopt specific policy initiatives requires some very specialized work (will discuss later), but with certain conditions and planning policy can be directed and changed.

Likewise in the Executive Branch, there are a variety of interventions points that shape policy particularly with regard to regulations, budget, and program planning activities. Table #2 charts these activities. As you can see there are intervention points where input in shaping policies can occur. It is important to remember, that unlike the Congress, where the process is more open to public involvement, the Executive Branch (inclusive of the bureaucracy) primarily involves the internal input of the institutional actors themselves. The key here, is to help guide the involvement of the institutional actors, through analysis, information, pressure at certain junctures of time. Given proper preparation and specialized knowledge, institutional involvement and input in shaping executive policy can be influenced.

In the case of the courts, litigation is the primary vehicle to obtain policy guidance. It is through court decisions that certain policy directives can be achieved. Court decisions are viable strategies to constraining and directing the Executive and bureaucratic branches to follow certain policy initiatives. The resources to mount effective litigation is the key to obtaining devised policy outcomes.

From the foregoing discussion it becomes apparent that social change advocates who are organized and knowledgeable of the process and actors can drive certain policy initiatives through the respective policy secotrs, particularly in the Congressional and Executive Branches. Thus social change goals and objectives

may be achieved through the policy development process and the continued expansion of social change initiatives can become a reality. Some may argue that this process is too incremental. It is true, that policy development may be a chipping away or adding to existing directives. But incremental change is important to achieving conditions for more fundamental change. And in times of crisis larger policy initiatives take place. The question is whether policy guidance (small or large) can be provided by the organized effort of social change advocates.

V. ACTION PLAN FOR SOCIAL CHANGE ADVOCATES

From our previous discussion I cited the lack of organization, leadership, and resources at the major obstacles to impacting on the policy development process.

These obstacles can be overcome by the expansion and solidification of our current organizations. With solid organization, comes purpose, and purpose is often typified by the values of the organization and leader. The guiding principles that reveal to individuals and the public, the beliefs and philosophies of the organized effort need to be espoused and acted on. The leader, then must be able to portray accurately the values of the organization and

often becomes a value creator of his own, instilling committment and direction to the organization. This is why leadership is so crucial to the potency of the organization and may explain in part why the poor never addressed the policy process adequately. There are too few leaders and those leaders we do have, are often lost through force or manipulation.

The fledgling organizations representing the interests of the poor and advocating social change need to be protected and expanded. Leadership must be nurtured and resources gathered. The development of viable organized efforts to impact the policy process must come within the ranks of the poor. They will work, and committment required to obtaining effective organization, leadership and resources will essentially be performed by those insisting on change and social equity.

The key action plan for change advocates to pursue is organization building. We need to shore up current organizations and build new ones. The organization's central mission must be justice, equity, and opportunity for the poor. Disadvantaged and minority populations facing barriers in society need to address the questions of fairness, equity and equal opportunity.

Once the mission has been clarified, organizations must decide which policy arena they wish to penetrate. The focus may be on education, health, economy, as well as programs or policies internal to those policy arenas (e.g., adult education, bilingual, higher education, student assistance).

The major purpose of organizations providing policy guidance is to defend and promote the interests and objectives of the constituency they serve. The organizations must protect the laws, regulations and budget of existing programs serving the poor and promote greater efforts and allocation of resources. This is the central creed to an organization's purpose.

In order to defend and promote social equity and change, organizations must connect substantive knowledge with political sophistration. Substantive knowledge includes, data, research and evaluation findings, information, and communications. Political sophistication requires organization pressure and politiking to secure desired policies. One strategy to link substance with politics is to bring together the efforts of the minority professional class with the political sector (minority organization leaders). Both sectors working on similar timetables and focusing on specific policies can initiate a strong movement toward policy change.

Political sophistication changes over time, but there are some fundamentals that need to be implemented in any policy change effort.

First - Organization Building

The foundation to influence policy development is through organization, stability, efficiency and coalition building to engage the policy sectors on particular issues.

Second - Knowing and Monitoring the Process

Organizations must have a working knowledge of how the process works. They must be able to address the Congressional, Executive, and Court processes at the same time. Knowing the individuals in the respective policy sectors who are responsible for those policies and programs you are interested in is critical.

Third - Networking

Local, regional, and national communication among constituencies and the leadership is essential. Most important is to bring the memberships to the centers of policy development (e.g., national, State, local capitols). This is an effective strategy to familiarize members to the process.

Fourth - Coalitions

It is clear, particularly in a tight economy, that coalitions between change advocates and organizations are extremely important to successfully guiding policy. I've seen examples of single constituency movements being eliminated or diluted, while coalition movements involving a number of constituencies, achieve important strides.

VI. SUMMARY

In this short paper I have sketched a series of issues confronting social change advocates. Headway was made in the 1960's, but the full implementation of these corrective measures never occured.

The lack of participation in the policy development process may be one of the reasons for less than full implementation. But, it is not too late - Understanding the process and how to influence it is one step. Gathering the organization,leadership, and resources is the second important step, and finally connecting our understanding and manpower to engage the policy development process, while forcing the issue at home is the third significant step to be taken.

To implement these steps takes committment, competency, and shared responsibility, from our organizations. If these steps are systematically addressed, perhaps the 1980's can be remembered as the decade where social interventions to eradicate inequality and lack of opportunity, were re-established and expanded narrowing the gap between generations of people.

TABLE -1-

HOUSE AND SENATE*

AUTHORIZATION	- Subcommittee	---- Full Committee	---- Full Body	
	Specific Amendments Recommended	---- Specific Amendments Approved	---- Amendments Passed	
TIMELINE	- Feb. - July	---- August	---- September	
APPROPRIATION	- Budget Marks (levels) Recommended	---- Budget Marks (levels) Approved	---- Budget Passed	CONFERENCE
	Amendments Recommended	Amendments Approved	Amendments Passed	
TIMELINE	- Feb. - July	---- June	---- August	

* Both the authorization and appropriation processes take place in the House and Senate calling for resolution at the House/Senate Conference Committee.

TABLE -2-

EXECUTIVE POLICY FORMULATION

REGULATIONS PROCESS[1] (Rules to govern the management and allocation of resources for legislated activities)

DIVISION DIRECTOR	DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY	ASSISTANT SECRETARY (Policy & Program)	UNDERSECRETARY	SECRETARY
DRAFT	RECOMMENDATIONS & REVISIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS & REVISIONS	APPROVAL	APPROVAL
TIMELINE	(year-round)			

BUDGET[2] (Allocation of resources to program priorities and initiatives)

DIVISION DIRECTOR	DEPUTY ASSISTANT SECRETARY	ASSISTANT SECRETARY	UNDERSECRETARY	SECRETARY
Zero-Base Review	RECOMMENDATIONS & REVISIONS	RECOMMENDATIONS & REVISIONS	APPROVAL	APPROVAL
TIMELINE	July	August	September	October	November

1/ Regulations are subject to a 45-day review by Congress.
2/ Budget is subject to a review (December) by OMB.